

Is no life—like those coal-pits into which it is impossible to draw the air, and in which all life must perish.

FOURTHLY, THERE IS A TROUBLED CONSCIENCE. Southey, in one of his poems, tells us of a bell—which had been suspended on a rock, that the sound given as the waves beat upon it might warn the mariner of the propinquity to danger—having had its rope cut by pirates, because of the warning which it uttered. It so happened, however, that at a future period these very pirates struck upon that rock which they had stript of its means of admonishing them. Which things may be unto us for an allegory. Mankind take pains to stifle the voice that would admonish them, and they partially succeed, but it is only to find themselves sinking at last in misery thereby more fearfully augmented.

There are violent and convulsive movements of self-reproach which will at times break in upon the self-satisfaction of the most complacent. Man's peace is in this respect like the sultry heat of a summer's day: it is close and disagreeable at the time, and ever liable to be broken in upon by the thunders and tempests of the Divine indignation. Even in the case of those who are anxious to keep their attention turned away as much as possible from themselves, and as little as possible upon the state of their hearts, there will occur intervals unfilled up between the scenes that engross them, and on these occasions there will be recollections called up which occasion the keenest misery. It may be after a day of selfish business, or an evening of sinful excitement, that such unwelcome visitations are paid to them to disturb their rest, while others have buried their cares in the forgetfulness of sleep. Or it may be, in the time of disease, or in the prospect of death, that the ghosts of deeds committed long ago spring up as from the grave. These gloomy fears proceeding from conscious guilt always rise up like a ghostly apparition, never in the sunshine of prosperity, but

always in the
gloom of adversity, to render the darkness more
horrific. The
wicked are thus, in the time of prosperity, heaping
up accumulated sorrow, to aggravate the scenes of misery
through which they must at last pass. They are vainly
attempting to stop the
current altogether by a feeble mound, which, as
it gives way,
lets in the deep waters upon the soul with the
power of an over-
whelming flood.

A number of circumstances combine to force
sin upon the